

***The Institution of Engineers, Australia: Sydney Division
Monaro Group***

Oral History Program: Biographical Notes

Kenneth Edward JOHNSON (1925 -)
Civil Engineer

Birth & Family: Born 15th October, 1925 in Crows Nest , Sydney.

Education:

Qualifications: 1950 B.E Civil (Hons II) Sydney University

Memberships: The Institution of Engineers, *Australia (Is he an ordinary Member of a Fellow?)* .

Life Member , American Society of Civil Engineers

Member, Hydrological Society, ACT

Awards:

Work History: After completing the Leaving Certificate in 1943, Johnson started a cadetship in design with the Water Conservation & Irrigation Commission, Sydney. He returned to the Commission after a short traineeship with the RAAF. He started university under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS) whilst continuing his cadetship with WR&IC

After completing his degree in 1950, Johnson was design engineer on the Keepit Dam Outlet Works with WR&IC. He designed the trashrack structure, dam galleries, power house and bulkhead gates.

In 1951, Johnson accepted a position lecturing in Civil Engineering at the University of Technology (later became the University of New South Wales).

Returning to WR&IC in 1953, he became the Head of Investigations of the Hydrology Branch. Johnson was instrumental in the assessment of the spillway design flood for Burrendong Dam by use of storm analysis and probable precipitation applied to unitgraphs. His experience with designs and flood studies, his involvement with one of the first computers used in his field and placement on several technical committees led to Johnson taking a position with the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electrical Scheme in 1957.

Initially, Johnson took the position of Engineer for System Investigation. His investigations included the report on the six major alternative arrangements for the Snowy-Murray Development as well as the Optimum Feature Size Determination for all projects of the scheme.

In 1960 he was appointed Engineering Chief of the Developing Division, which he held till his departure in 1968. His achievements in this area were highlighted by the preparation of the notification of output and cost of production for all power stations of the Scheme. He also had detailed involvement in the preliminary design of the Tumut Project (*there were a number of Tumut powerstations the largest being T3 – from the list below it looks as though this is the one being referred to. If it is, and so the reference should be changed accordingly*), the largest hydro-electric project in Australia. Also notable was the conception, investigation and

project report, which resulted in the adoption of the Shoalhaven Scheme for the augmentation of the Sydney Water Supply.

Johnson's extensive work with this division included:

Jindabyne Dam	February, 1962
Khancoban Dam	June, 1962
Jindabyne Pumping Station	October, 1962
Murray 2 Project	December, 1962
Blowering Power Station	February, 1964
Jounama Dam	December, 1964
Tumut 3 Project	July, 1965
Eucumbene Spillway	February, 1966.

as well as investigations of dam sites in Queensland, Canberra, Malaysia, Bougainville and Ramu in New Guinea.

In 1968, Johnson was appointed Chief Executive of the River Murray Commission. His field and office studies lead to the decision to build Dartmouth Dam instead of Chowilla. He participated in the implementation of improved water management arrangements adopted by States. Johnson was also involved in the process authorising the Commission to monitor water quality making representation to Contracting Governments (*this statement needs clarifying – I don't know what it means*). His studies also provided the technical basis for the adoption of a salinity and drainage strategy.

Johnson retired from the Murray Darling Basin Commission in July 1990 and later returned as a consultant to complete the revision of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement. He was later appointed by the Rural Water Commission of Victoria to report to the Minister for Water Resources on a review of operating rules for the Lough Calvert Drainage Scheme. In 1993, he undertook Water Management Audits of Gwydir, Namoi, Lachlan and Macquarie Rivers for the Department of Water Resources, NSW.

Prepared by Michelle Keatinge, July 2003 from oral history interview conducted by Matthew Higgins on 25.2.1999.